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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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DEATH IN THE SKY CLAIMS 241, 1 SURVIVOR

The plane crashes within a minute of take-off from Ahmedabad airport

It crashes into a hospital and hostel for medicos, leaving many dead

Tata Group gives Rs 1 crore aid to victims of India's worst crash

The images show the London-bound Air India plane crashing just moments after taking off from the Ahmedabad's Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport on Thursday; Fire and emergency services personnel comb through the crash site, desperately searching for survivors *PHOTO: PTI*

AHMEDABAD, 12 JUNE

In India's worst aviation disasters, an Air India flight (AI171) from Ahmedabad to London crashed minutes after take-off on Thursday, killing nearly all of the 242 passengers and crew on board, along with several others on the ground.

The 11-year-old Boeing 787 Dreamliner, which took off from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport, crashed into the city civil hospital and BJ Medical College complex, bursting into flames and sending thick black smoke billowing into the sky. The plane had climbed only 600-800 feet before rapidly losing altitude and crashing, aviation sources said.

"Approximately 294 have died. This includes some students as the plane crashed on the building where they were staying," Vidhi Chaudhary, a top police officer, told Reuters.

The lone survivor is 40-year-old Vishwash Kumar Ramesh, a British-Indian based in London. He had travelled to Ahmedabad with his brother, who perished in the crash. "I was visiting family. My brother and I boarded the plane together," he said.

The tail of the airplane is seen stuck in a building at the site of the crash *PHOTO: PTI*

'Bodies everywhere'

Visuals from the crash site showed the aircraft's nose piercing the top floor of a residential building used by nurses and doctors. Several bodies were pulled from the wreckage, with many of the injured suffering severe burns. Eyewitnesses reported an intense fire that engulfed multi-storey buildings, burnt trees, and destroyed numerous vehicles.

Operations at the airport were suspended temporarily but resumed later in the evening. Boeing said it is in contact with Air India and is prepared to assist in the investigation.

Rs 1 crore aid

The Tata Group, which owns Air India, has announced compensation of Rs 1 crore for the families of each person who died in the crash.

Compensation for victims will be governed by the Montreal Convention, to which India is a signatory. Experts say compensation, calculated using Special Drawing Rights, may reach up to approx. USD 171,000 per passenger. Final payouts depend on Air India's insurance coverage.

DNA test to identify victims

The Gujarat health department confirmed that DNA tests would be conducted to identify the victims. Dhananjay Dwivedi, principal secretary, said, "Relatives of the deceased can give DNA samples at Kasoti Bhavan of BJ Medical College. This is essential for accurate identification."

US to probe

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) of the United States announced that it would lead a team of American investigators to assist Indian authorities in the probe. The aircraft's black box — including the flight data and cockpit voice recorders — is being recovered to understand what happened during the final moments of the flight.

Britain's Air Accidents Investigation Branch said it has "formally offered its assistance" to the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau in India. It said it would have "expert status" in the investigation because UK citizens were on board the plane Thursday's crash is the second major aviation tragedy in Ahmedabad. In 1988, an Indian Airlines flight crashed on final approach, killing 130 people. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 2, 3 & 5

Ex-Gujarat CM Rupani killed

Former Gujarat chief minister (CM) Vijay Rupani is believed to be among those killed in crash. He is the second Gujarat CM to die in a plane crash after Balwantrai Mehta. He was reportedly seated in seat number 12

What happened?

Flight **AI171** crashes within **1 minute** after take-off from Ahmedabad airport

Route: Ahmedabad to Gatwick, London

Take off time: 1.38pm. Plane falls from 600-825 feet into a residential area in **Meghaninagar**

Total onboard: 242, including 2 pilots, 10 crew

Nationalities: 169 Indians, 7 Portuguese, 1 Canadian, 53 British onboard

Pilots: Captain **Sumeet Sabharwal,** a Long-Term Commander with 8,200 hours of flying experience. Co-pilot, First Officer **Clive Kundar,** had logged 1,100 hours.

Aircraft type: Boeing 787-8

This is the first ever crash of a 787 Dreamliner Boeing flight Dreamliner

MAYDAY CALL

The plane gave a 'MAYDAY' Call to ATC at 1.38pm, but thereafter, no response was given by the aircraft to the calls made by ATC. Immediately after departure from Runway 23, the Aircraft fell to the ground outside the airport perimeter. Heavy black smoke was seen coming from the site", said a source.

Troubled Boeing's shares tumble 9%

Boeing said it is working to gather more information even as the company's shares tumbled 9 per cent in market trading. Boeing has been in recovery mode for more than six years after Lion Air Flight 610, a Boeing 737 Max 8, plunged into the Java Sea off the coast of Indonesia minutes after takeoff from Jakarta, killing 189 people on board. Five months later, Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302, a Boeing 737 Max 8, crashed after takeoff from Addis Ababa, killing 157.

India ranks 131st in Global Gender Gap

NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

India ranked 131 out of 148 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2025, which was released on Thursday. With a parity score of just 64.1 per cent, India is among the lowest-ranked countries in South Asia. India ranked 129 in 2024. *—PTI*

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CM urges Andhra to lift mango ban

BENGALURU, 12 JUNE

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has urged Andhra Pradesh counterpart Chandrababu Naidu to revoke the ban on Totapuri mangoes from Karnataka entering Chittoor district. In a letter dated 11 June, Siddaramaiah criticised the unilateral decision, calling it contrary to the spirit of cooperative federalism and warned of possible retaliatory measures that could disrupt inter-state trade. The ban was imposed on 7 June by the Chittoor District Collector. *—PTI*

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1 dead as K'taka braces for rain

MANGALURU, 12 JUNE

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued red alert for several districts in Karnataka, including Hubballi-Dharwad, Gadag and parts of Haveri. It also issued a seven-day warning for almost all districts of Karnataka till 17 June due to the southwest monsoon.

For 13 June, a red alert remains in place for Uttara Kannada, Udupi, Shivamogga, Dakshina Kannada and Chikkamagaluru districts.

Meanwhile, a man is feared to have drowned after being swept away in a low-lying waterlogged area near Mavanur Road on the outskirts of Hubballi, following heavy rains on Wednesday night.

Hubballi taluka Tehsildar Kallangouda Patil told ANI, "A search operation has been ongoing for the last 10 hours." District authorities have announced a holiday for all anganwadi centres, schools and PU and degree colleges in Dharwad, Uttara Kannada and Dakshina Kannada on Thursday. People are advised to avoid unnecessary travel. Dharwad Deputy Commissioner Divya Prabhu warned of floods in the catchment areas of Benni Halla and Tuppari Halla. Uttara Kannada Deputy Commissioner Lakshmi Priya K said rains are anticipated till 20 June. Heavy rainfall has been predicted in Bengaluru with the IMD issuing an alert.

—Salar News

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Israel poised to strike Iran amid nuke talks: Report

TEL AVIV, 12 JUNE

Israel is reportedly preparing to launch a military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities within days, even as high-level diplomatic talks are scheduled to resume on Sunday. US networks NBC and CBS reported early Thursday that US officials believe Israel is moving towards a long-threatened attack.

The reports surfaced shortly after the US announced plans to evacuate some personnel from the region. A senior Iranian official told Reuters that a "friendly" regional country had warned Tehran of the possible Israeli strike. The rising tensions come as negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme face a potential breakdown. US President Donald Trump has lost confidence in reaching a deal, following Tehran's firm stance on maintaining uranium enrichment. *—PTI*

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1st RCB stampede death was before V Soudha event

BENGALURU,12 JUNE

Hospital record of the 4 June stampede at M Chinnaswamy Stadium, which claimed the lives of 11 Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) fans, have revealed that the first death occurred at 3.45 pm—prior to the official RCB felicitation event at Vidhana Soudha.

Hospital records and post-mortem reports show that 10 more deaths were recorded at three central Bengaluru hospitals between 4.15 pm and 5.15 pm, even as RCB's IPL victory celebrations continued from 4 pm to 6 pm at two separate venues.

The timing of the fatalities has sparked controversy, as the felicitation at Vidhana Soudha—attended by Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy CM D K Shivakumar, and other cabinet members—was held from 4pm to 5pm, despite the unfolding tragedy. A parallel celebration at Chinnaswamy Stadium, attended by thousands, took place from 5pm to 6pm. *—PTI*

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90-DAY DEADLINE

K'taka Cabinet gives nod to conduct new caste survey

BENGALURU, 12 JUNE

The Karnataka Cabinet has "unanimously" decided to conduct a fresh Socio-Educational Survey—commonly referred to as a caste census—across the State, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced on Thursday.

The new survey, to be completed and reported within 90 days, will be carried out by the Karnataka State Backward Classes Commission. The Chief Minister said the move follows legal provisions under Section 11(1) of the Karnataka State Backward Classes Commission Act, as it has been a decade since the last survey in 2015.

Siddaramaiah said the cabinet decision was taken after discussions with Congress leadership, including party president Mallikarjun Kharge and senior leader Rahul Gandhi, who earlier this week urged the state to initiate fresh caste re-enumeration.

"There were concerns that several communities were excluded in the previous survey. This new survey aims to address those gaps," Siddaramaiah said.

The cabinet had been reviewing the findings of the 2015 survey over several meetings since April. Siddaramaiah confirmed that the government would now consult the Commission formally and begin preparations for the new enumeration. *—PTI*

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TENDER ARMS OUT ON FIRM RESOLVE

Children participate in a rally on the eve of the 'World Day Against Child Labour' at the Gandhi Statue on MG Road in Bengaluru on Thursday
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Siddaramaiah says plane crash very unfortunate

BENGALURU, 12 JUNE

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday called the Air India plane crash as "very unfortunate" incident and prayed for the safety of passengers onboard the flight. Air India flight AI 171 from Ahmedabad to London, Gatwick, on Thursday, was involved in a crash shortly after takeoff, outside the airport. Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar expressed condolences to the victims of the crash, in a post on 'X', even as many are feared dead in the crash. Leader of Opposition in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly R Ashoka said he is devastated by the news of the flight crash in Ahmedabad, in a post on 'X'. ***—PTI***

5-yr-old boy dies in mishap post first day at school

BELAGAVI, 12 JUNE

A five-year-old boy lost his life after his first day at school in Belagavi district on Wednesday. Mutturaj, son of Shankar Mugalkod from Gurlapur in Mudalagi taluk, had just attended his first-grade class at Samartha Primary School in Naganoor town, near Raibag. He was returning home with his elder sister Priya, a Grade 7 student at the same school, when the tragedy struck. While crossing the Nippani-Mudhol state highway near Raibag town with other students, Mutturaj was hit by a speeding motorbike. Moments later, a fast-approaching car ran over him, killing him on the spot. Raibag Police Inspector Narasimraju JD said a case has been registered. A search is on for the drivers of both the bike and the car involved in the accident. ***—Salar News***

Girl dies of electric shock from pole near Anekal home

BENGALURU, 12 JUNE

An 11-year-old girl died after allegedly coming into contact with a live electric pole near Anekal on the outskirts of the city, police said on Thursday. The incident occurred on Tuesday, and the victim has been identified as Tanishka S, a Class V student. Police said she was playing outside her home when she accidentally came into contact with a live electric pole and collapsed. She was rushed to a hospital where she was declared brought dead on arrival. "It is being alleged that the electric pole was live due to a technical fault with the earthing system. However, this needs to be verified, hence we have called in experts from the FSL team," a police officer said. ***—PTI***

Law mandates new caste surveys every 10 yrs: CM

Siddaramaiah says govt will conduct the exercise afresh

BENGALURU, 12 JUNE

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the State's survey would differ, focusing on a Socio–Educational study, which the Centre has not committed to take up
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday said the government will conduct a fresh caste survey, stating it is required by law after a 10-year interval. "It has been 10 years, and the law mandates a new survey. Accordingly, a decision has been made," he said.

Responding to queries on whether the earlier 2015 survey and its recommendations were discarded due to pressure from the Congress high command, Siddaramaiah clarified, "We looked into the Act when the matter came up for discussion. In the meantime, the high command gave suggestions, but we have not bowed to any pressure. The decision is lawful."

The 2015 survey, conducted by the Kantharaju-led Backward Classes Commission, faced stiff opposition from Karnataka's dominant Vokkaliga and Veerashaiva-Lingayat communities, who called it "unscientific". Even within the Congress, dissenting voices had demanded a fresh survey.

On the Centre's plan to include caste enumeration in the next national census, the CM said the state's survey would differ, focusing on a Socio-Educational study, which the Centre has not committed to.

Asked about assurances to Vokkaliga and Lingayat communities, Siddaramaiah said, "It's not just about them. Other backward communities have also given suggestions."

The 2015 door-to-door survey covered 5.98 crore people out of an estimated 6.35 crore population.

It involved 1.60 lakh staff, including 1.33 lakh teachers, and was conducted from April to May 2015.

Siddaramaiah said recommendations such as increasing Muslim reservation to 8% will be re-examined after the new survey.

The earlier report was not finalised during his first tenure. He accused former CM H D Kumaraswamy of pressuring his minister not to receive the report. The BJP later appointed K Jayaprakash Hegde, who submitted a revised report on 29 February, 2024, but it wasn't discussed due to the general elections. ***—PTI***

In coastal and north interior Karnataka, the weather department has forecast widespread rains till 17 June
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

N K'taka worst-hit as rains pound State

MANGALURU, 12 JUNE

The North of Karnataka is continuing to reel under the relentless rains this monsoon. Among the most affected districts are Hubballi-Dharwad, Gadag, and parts of Haveri.

A public advisory has been issued urging parents to prevent children from venturing near water bodies and low-lying areas. Fisherfolk have also been advised not to venture into the sea.

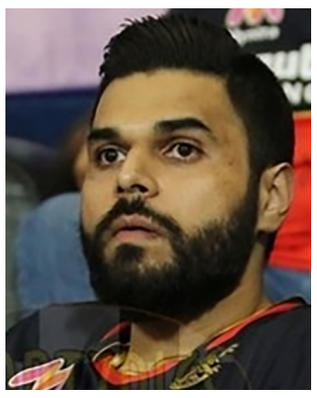
Officials at both district and taluk levels are to remain stationed at their headquarters for uninterrupted coordination of disaster management efforts. In coastal and north interior Karnataka, the weather department has forecast widespread rains till 17 June. In Dakshina Kannada, Uttara Kannada and Udupi districts (coastal Karnataka) — IMD has forecast "heavy to very heavy rain with sustained wind at 30 to 40 kilometre per hour (kmph), which likely to occur at a few places and extremely heavy rain likely to occur at one or two places".

In Belagavi, Dharwad and Gadag districts (north interior Karnataka) — "heavy to very heavy rain with sustained wind at 50 to 60 kmph likely to occur at a few places and extremely heavy rain with sustained wind likely to occur at one or two places".

In south interior Karnataka, the prediction is for "fairly widespread" rainfall till 14 June, before turning "widespread" for the next three days. Bengaluru too can expect heavy rain with 40-50 kmph winds, along with Chikkaballapura, Mandya, Ramanagara, Tumakuru, Mysuru, Davangere, Hassan and Vijayanagar districts, IMD said. ***—Salar News***

Stadium stampede: HC relief to RCB official, three others

BENGALURU, 12 JUNE



Nikhil Sosale ***PHOTO: BCCI***

Karnataka High Court on Thursday ordered interim release of RCB Marketing head Nikhil Sosale and there others arrested in connection with the 4 June stampede that killed 11 people.

Others who got relief from the High Court are Sunil Mathew, Kiran Kumar S and Shamant N P Mavinakere of the event organising company DNA Entertainment Networks Pvt Ltd, who were also arrested on 6 June.

The Court asked the arrested persons to surrender their passports.

The stampede occurred outside the Chinnaswamy stadium during an event organised to celebrate the Royal Challengers Bengaluru's maiden IPL title win.

The case came up for hearing before Justice SR Krishna Kumar, who had reserved the verdict on interim plea by Sosale after hearing arguments on 11 June.

Meanwhile, the High Court on Thursday received all relevant documents it had demanded in connection with the case. The documents in Kannada were submitted in a sealed envelope before a division bench comprising Acting Chief Justice V Kameshwar Rao and Justice CM Joshi.

Advocate General Shashi Kiran Shetty assured the bench that an English translation would be provided in two days. The matter has been posted for further hearing on 17 June.

ASHOKA SEEKS NHRC PROBE

Leader of Opposition R Ashoka has sought the urgent intervention of National Human Right Commission (NHRC) into the probe into the stampede. He urged the Commission to launch a comprehensive investigation into the roles and responsibilities of all government officials, agencies, and private entities involved in organising the event. ***—PTI***

PLANE CRASH: BJP DEFERS PROTEST OVER STAMPEDE

BENGALURU, 12 JUNE

In the wake of an the Air India plane crash near Ahmedabad airport, Karnataka BJP on Thursday announced that it has postponed its mega protest against the state government in Bengaluru on 13 June in connection with the recent stampede incident that killed 11 people.

The protest was aimed at holding the state government and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy D K Shivakumar responsible for the June 4 incident and to demand their resignation. The party leaders had also planned to lay a siege to the CM's residence.

"The BJP had planned a mega protest at Bengaluru's Freedom Park against the state government for its lack of preparedness, leading to the death of 11 people due to the stampede during the RCB team's IPL victory celebrations. But following the Air India plane crash in Gujarat this afternoon killing a number of people, we have decided to postpone the protest," BJP MLC N Ravikumar said.

In a video statement, he said, "All party workers who were to participate in the protest are hereby informed of the postponement." He did not share any details about the new date for the protest.

State BJP President BY Vijayendra said, "In the wake of this national disaster, the BJP's planned protest against the state government in Bengaluru tomorrow (Friday) has been postponed." ***—PTI***

CM will lose power in six months: Ashoka

Congress workers at a press meet at Maurya Hotel in Bengaluru on Thursday
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

MYSURU, 12 JUNE

Leader of Opposition R Ashoka said on Thursday that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah would lose his position within six months.

He also ridiculed an "agreement" about a change of CM in the State, Siddaramaiah tendering resignation, saying that it is not registered in any notary office, but it is registered in the office of the sub-registrar. There are many aspirants to the CM's post, including Deputy CM DK Shivakumar, PWD Minister Satish Jharkhiholi and Lingayat strongman and Heavy Industries Minister MB Patil.

Ashoka told media persons in Mysuru that BJP leaders are expecting a change of CM because of Shivakumar's statement in a recent session of the Assembly in Belagavi regarding forcibly grabbing power. As the Congress government in the State is not stable, a change of CM has become imminent, he said.

The BJP leader said people are already upset about the Congress government's neglect towards development in the State. With the coffers empty, the government is struggling to release the salaries of its staff, while it has kept pending the bills of contractors and the release of pensions, he said. ***—Salar News***

NEW HANGOUT IN TOWN

A view of the renovated Venkatappa Art Gallery, inaugurated by Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar in Bengaluru on Thursday
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Bengaluru may get 'flying buses', says Gadkari

NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari has revealed that India is exploring futuristic public transport solutions, including elevated "flying buses" and flash-charging electric systems, to ease traffic congestion and cut pollution in major cities.

Gadkari, speaking to NDTV, said the government is evaluating 360 proposals, with pilot projects already planned for Delhi and Bengaluru. "Our biggest problems are pollution and fossil fuel imports, which cost us Rs 22 lakh crore," he noted. "Public transport must be prioritised, but people now demand comfort. Luxury buses are gaining popularity." ***—PTI***

WARNS OF RETALIATION

Siddaramaiah urges Naidu to lift ban on Totapuri mangoes

BENGALURU, 12 JUNE

Totapuri mango growers in Karnataka have long relied on Chittoor's pulp processing units
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has urged Andhra Pradesh counterpart Chandrababu Naidu to revoke the ban on Totapuri mangoes from Karnataka entering Chittoor district. In a letter dated 11 June, Siddaramaiah criticised the unilateral decision, calling it contrary to the spirit of cooperative federalism and warned of possible retaliatory measures that could disrupt inter-state trade.

The ban, reportedly imposed on 7 June by the Chittoor District Collector, has led to multidisciplinary enforcement teams being deployed at inter-state checkposts with Tamil Nadu and Karnataka to block mango shipments.

Karnataka's Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh had already written to her Andhra counterpart K Vijayanand on 10 June, seeking revocation of the order. Meanwhile, mango farmers in Srinivasapura, a key growing area in Karnataka's Kolar district, held protests and a taluk-wide bandh demanding both a support price and withdrawal of the ban.

Siddaramaiah highlighted that Totapuri mango growers in Karnataka have long relied on Chittoor's pulp processing units, and the restriction is causing major supply chain disruptions. The ban, he warned, could lead to post-harvest losses and severely affect the livelihoods of thousands of farmers in Karnataka's border regions.

Expressing concern over escalating tensions, Siddaramaiah called on Naidu to take swift action and direct Chittoor authorities to lift the restriction. "This issue warrants urgent attention to ensure seamless movement of agricultural produce and safeguard farmer welfare," the letter stated. ***—PTI***

Ambedkar banner removal sparks protests at UoM

MYSURU, 12 JUNE

Hundreds of members of the University of Mysore Researchers' Association and the Dalit Students' Federation on Thursday staged a protest against the vice chancellor and registrar at Clock Tower Circle on the Manasagangothri campus for removing the banners of Dr BR Ambedkar Jayanthi celebrations.

The association members had installed the banners in front of the Department of Collegiate Education on the campus. Varsity staff reportedly removed the banners after they were damaged by some miscreants.

The agitating students also prevented the entry of all private vehicles to the campus, excluding those of the students.

Tension prevailed in the campus following the protests with the deployment of tight police security.

The association members have also filed a complaint with Jayalakshmipuram police, leading to the registration of an FIR.

The protesters demanded that the varsity suspend the staff responsible for this incident and appealed to police to arrest the miscreants who damaged the banners. ***—Salar News***

Debris of the Air India plane that crashed after takeoff, in Ahmedabad on Thursday

PHOTO: PTI/ANI

NOT TODAY: MAN CHEATS DEATH

He claims that 30 seconds after take-off there was a loud noise in the plane

AHMEDABAD, 12 JUNE

Lone survivor Vishwash Kumar Ramesh held onto his ticket while jumping out of the emergency exit PHOTO: PTI

In a miraculous escape, British national Vishwash Kumar Ramesh defied death to be the lone survivor of the Air India crash on its Ahmedabad to London route. The Boeing 787 Dreamliner crashed moments after take-off from Ahmedabad. Ramesh, who was seated in 11A, allegedly jumped out of the plane's emergency exit in a desperate attempt to survive. "Thirty seconds after take-off, there was a loud noise and then the plane crashed. It all happened so quickly," he recalled. Despite suffering impact injuries including chest bruising and injuries to his eyes and feet, Ramesh remained conscious and lucid.

Clutching his boarding pass, he recounted the horror: "When I got up, there were bodies all around me. I was scared. I stood up and ran. There were pieces of the plane all around me. Someone grabbed hold of me and put me in an ambulance and brought me to the hospital."

Ramesh was travelling with his brother, Ajay Kumar Ramesh, 45, whose fate remains unknown. Ramesh said the trouble began within half a minute of take-off.

Grief-stricken families of passengers gathered in anguish, with the government yet to release an official list of the deceased. Loved ones remain in the dark about the fate of those on board, adding to the torment.

Deepak Pathak, a cabin crew member and resident of Badlapur in Thane district near Mumbai, had called his mother in the morning with a cheerful "good morning", his sister said. Since the crash, his family has heard no news. Pathak had served Air India for 11 years and was married four years ago. Nagpur resident Manish Kamdar said his daughter Yasha Modha, her 18-month-old son, and her mother-in-law were also aboard the ill-fated flight. "I spoke to my daughter in the morning, but now I have no clue about her or the others' condition," he said.

Kamdar is on his way to Ahmedabad by road while his son-in-law waits outside the Ahmedabad Civil Hospital, unable to gain entry or receive information.

Among other known passengers were at least ten from Rajasthan, including four from Udaipur and five from a family in Banswara district. Siblings Shubh and Shagun Modi, MBA graduates from Udaipur and children of marble trader Sanjeev Modi, were travelling to London for leisure.

Inside the building, four MBBS students and a doctor's wife were among those killed, a senior official said.

Two other MBBS students and three relatives of doctors are missing, she said.

Reports said that at least 50 were injured in the premises. "Five of them are serious. Two third-years are untraceable," college dean Dr Minakshi Parikh said. *—Agencies*

Deeply saddened by news. My thoughts are with all those affected. The UK is working with local authorities in India to urgently establish the facts and provide support. The scenes emerging devastating.

-Keir Starmer, British Prime Minister

No words can adequately express the grief we feel at this moment. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families who have lost their loved ones, and with those who have been injured. Tata Group... will cover the medical expenses of those injured and ensure that they receive all necessary care and support. Additionally, we will provide support in the building up of the BJ Medical's hostel.

-Natarajan Chandrasekaran, Chairmain of Tata group, Air India Owner

Boeing whisteblowers flagged concerns over Dreamliner 787

Prior to the fateful crash, whitstleblowers had flagged the Boeing 787 Dreamliner. In 2024, Boeing engineer Sam Salehpour raised serious concerns about the structural integrity of the Boeing 787 Dreamliner. He had filed a formal whistleblower complaint with the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Salehpour claimed that the American aircraft company took shortcuts while manufacturing both the 777 and 787 models. He claimed that there were misaligned fuselage sections and microscopic gaps that were not being properly filled during assembly. He claimed these issues could result in structural fatigue, potentially shortening the aircraft's lifespan or even causing a catastrophic failure over time.

Similarly, John Barnett, a former Boeing quality manager, alleged that under pressure to meet deadlines, workers were installing substandard parts, including from scrap bins. He further claimed that up to 25 per cent of the 787's emergency oxygen systems could fail in flight. Barnett was found dead in suspicious circumstances in March 2024 in South Carolina during legal proceedings linked to a lawsuit he had filed against Boeing.

'Plastic Fantastic' Dreamliner's first accident

Boeing's Dreamliner series, launched in 2011, was considered one of the safest aircraft. The Ahmedabad accident was the first accident linked to the Boeing Dreamliner's 787. It was nicknamed 'plastic fantastic', referring to its construction comprised of mainly composite material (primarily carbon fibre) rather than aluminumn, which traditionally made up most of the plane's structure. The use of composites allowed for a supposedly lighter, more fuel-efficient aircraft.

Why is a Black Box important?

Retrieving the Black Box from the crashed flight is of paramount importance as it will allow officials to piece together what happened. A black box is a flight recorder with origins in the early 1950s. It comprises two key components: Cockpit Voice Recorder and the Flight Data Recorder. Both are designed to survive extreme impacts. It helps officials assess the human factors involved and any signs of miscommunication.

Typically, specialised teams from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation are tasked with recovering the devices and analysing the data. Black Box data has historically served as the most reliable witness and allowed officials to decipher the failures.

Engine failure, bird-hit could have caused crash: Experts

AHMEDABAD, 12 JUNE

Experts said that it was more likely a problem with the aircraft itself than any external issue PHOTO: PTI

Failure of both engines or a bird hit soon after take-off could be among the probable causes that led to the fatal crash of a London-bound Air India aircraft with 242 people onboard, according to experts.

Three senior wide-body pilots, who are also instructors, said that looking at the videos of the crash, it seems that the engines could not gain the required thrust needed for the take-off, resulting in a fatal crash into the residential area seconds after it took off.

One of the commanders said it does not seem to be the case of one engine failure because in such a scenario, the aircraft would have been swinging but here, the aircraft was steady. "So, there is the possibility of both the engines failing... there could have been a loss of thrust in both engines," a commander said, adding that it appears that either the flaps were up or landing gear was down at the time of take-off.

The second commander added that there was likely a lack of thrust in both the engines. "This could happen if both engines had flameout due to a bird hit," he said.

The third commander said the aircraft's both engines might have lost power. One engine might have failed and possibly due to the landing gear being not retracted after take-off, the second engine might not have had adequate power.

US experts said the plane involved in the crash at Ahmedabad did not seem "properly configured". Aviation safety consultant John M Cox said, "The image shows the airplane with the nose rising and it continuing to sink," he said. "That says that the airplane is not making enough lift."

The weight of the aircraft determines the V1 speed or take-off speed. If the calculated speed is lower than required, the engines will struggle to get the plane airborne. *—PTI*

The damaged mess at BJ Medical college premises PHOTO: PTI

Charred bodies scattered around medical college

AHMEDABAD, 12 JUNE

Debris of Air India's Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft (AI171) which crashed after take-off from the Ahmedabad airport on Thursday afternoon were seen scattered around the hostel and residential quarters of doctors at the BJ Medical college premises.

Videos shot by residents showed charred bodies in the debris.

The area around the crash site is densely populated. The entire accident site was cordoned off when the operations to extricate the bodies was underway.

A part of the plane stuck out from the five-storey building.

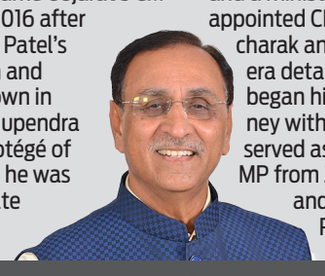
"The plane was flying very low before it crashed," eye-witness Haresh Shah said. "As it crashed into the building, the sound was like a blast, and the plane and the building caught fire."

Local residents were the first to reach the site and try to save the passengers as well as those in the building.

"The plane crashed in the dining hall of the hostel where people were present," said another eye-witness. Several cars and other vehicles parked on the hospital-college premises also caught fire. *—PTI*

Who is former Gujarat CM Rupani?

Rupani became Gujarat's CM in August 2016 after Anandiben Patel's resignation and stepped down in 2021 for Bhupendra Patel. A protégé of Amit Shah, he was the BJP state president and a minister when appointed CM. An RSS pracharak and Emergency-era detainee, Rupani began his political journey with ABVP. He served as a Rajya Sabha MP from 2006 to 2012 and was MLA from Rajkot West.



Aircraft was not flight ready, says passenger who flew earlier

A man who flew from Delhi to Ahmedabad on Thursday aboard the same Air India Boeing 787-8 aircraft that crashed a few hours later said that the aircraft had a number of issues and was not flight ready.

"I was in the same d**n flight 2 hours before it took off from AMD. I came in this from DEL-AMD. Noticed unusual things in the place. Made a video to tweet to @airindia. I would want to give more details," said Akash Vatsa, entrepreneur, on X.

He also shared videos from inside the aircraft, saying the air-conditioning and in-flight entertainment system were not working. "The AC is not working. And as usual, the TV screens are not working. Not even the light is working. Is this what you are providing?" Vatsa said. The video has since gone viral.

Akash Vatsa shared videos from inside the flight

EAM Jaishankar meets Macron in Paris

PARIS, 12 JUNE

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met with French President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday, expressing gratitude for France's robust support in combating terrorism.

The meeting occurred amidst Jaishankar's European tour aimed at strengthening bilateral relations and reaffirming India's zero-tolerance stance on terrorism, particularly following the Pahalgam terror attack on 22 April that claimed 26 lives.

Discussions during the meeting underscored the trust and ambition of the Strategic Partnership between the two nations. *—PTI*

'WE WANTED BETTER'

Fake news ruined India ties: Yunus

LONDON/NEW DELHI 12 JUNE

Bangladesh Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus has said that his interim government wanted good relations with India, but "something always went wrong".

During an interaction with Chatham House think tank director Bronwen Maddox in London on Wednesday, Yunus addressed a wide range of issues, including bilateral ties with India and the democratic roadmap for the country, starting with a "July Charter" next month.

"We want to build the best of relationship with India. It's our neighbour, we don't want to have any kind of basic problem with them," Yunus said. "But somehow things go wrong every time because of all the fake news coming from the Indian press... and many people say it has connections with policymakers on the top."

Muhammad Yunus PHOTO: X

Meanwhile, India strongly condemned the vandalisation of the ancestral home of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore in Bangladesh by a mob and termed the violent attack a "disgrace" to the memory and inclusive philosophy espoused by the poet.

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal urged in Bangladesh to rein in these elements and take "strict action" against the perpetrators.

"The violent attack is a disgrace to the memory and the inclusive philosophy, teachings that the Nobel Laureate espoused," he said. *—PTI*

Fadnavis meets Raj Thackeray fuelling alliance buzz

MUMBAI, 12 JUNE

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) leader Raj Thackeray met at a five-star hotel in Bandra on Thursday morning, fuelling speculation about a potential rapprochement between Thackeray and his estranged cousin, Shiv Sena (UBT) Chief Uddhav Thackeray.

While sources confirmed the meeting, details remained scarce, with BJP spokesperson Keshav Upadhye indicating that the two leaders are good friends likely discussing development issues. This comes as the Maharashtra government has initiated the process for local body elections, announcing ward delimitation for 29 municipal corporations, including Mumbai.

Recent statements from both Raj and Uddhav Thackeray have sparked discussions about a possible reconciliation, nearly two decades after their split. Raj has suggested that uniting for the benefit of "Marathi manoos" (Marathi-speaking people), whereas Uddhav expressed readiness to overlook trivial disputes. *—PTI*

T'gana CM acquitted in 2023 police remarks case

HYDERABAD, 12 JUNE

A local court has acquitted Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy in a case filed against him for allegedly making derogatory remarks about the police. The designated MP-MLA court delivered its judgment on Thursday, determining that Reddy was not guilty under the relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

The complainant claimed that Reddy, who was the president of the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) at the time, had "noted down in his diary the names of Mahbubnagar Police and used derogatory language against the Telangana police". *—PTI*

Four held in rape of three minors in Goa guest house

PANAJI, 12 JUNE

The owner and manager of a guest house in North Goa have been arrested along with two men accused of raping three minor girls within its premises. The incidents reportedly occurred on 7 June and 8 after the girls, residents of the same building, checked in at the guest house with the accused. Following complaints from the girls' parents on 8 June regarding their disappearance, police rescued them. The two men, Altaf Mujawar, 19 and Om Naik, 21, were apprehended immediately. Rajat Chauhan 31 and Mansoor Peer 35, the guest house owner and manager, were arrested for failing to verify parental consent before accommodating the girls. All four face charges under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the POCSO Act, and the Goa Children's Act. *—PTI*

Two killed, three injured in mishap at AP pharma plant

PARAWADA, 12 JUNE

A tragic accident at the effluent treatment plant of SS Pharma Company in Jawaharlal Nehru Pharma City has led to the deaths of two workers. The incident occurred around 1am on 12 June, according to local police. Parawada's sub-divisional police officer, Vishnu Swaroop, reported that three workers were hospitalised following the incident; however, two succumbed to their injuries while another remains in critical condition. The precise cause of the accident has not yet been determined, as police are currently awaiting reports from the Pollution Control Board and the factory inspector. This tragic event raises concerns about safety protocols and working conditions within the pharmaceutical industry in the region. *—PTI*

ED questions Dino Morea in ₹65 cr Mithi river scam

MUMBAI, 12 JUNE

Bollywood actor Dino Morea appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday in connection with a money laundering investigation tied to an alleged Rs 65 crore desilting scam involving the Mithi River. Morea arrived at the ED's office in Ballard Estate, Mumbai, around 10.30am. The ED recently conducted searches at over 15 locations in Mumbai and Kochi, including Morea's residence and those associated with his brother Santino. This investigation is linked to a Mumbai Police Economic Offences Wing FIR filed against 13 individuals, including contractors and municipal officials. Allegations suggest the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) manipulated tenders to favour specific machinery suppliers, resulting in fraudulent billing by contractors. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Sidhu Moosewala's tracks released on 32nd birth anniv

CHANDIGARH, 12 JUNE

On what would have been his 32nd birthday, the family of the late Punjabi musician Sidhu Moosewala has unveiled three new songs: '0008', 'Neal', and 'Take Notes'. The tracks, part of the "Moose Print" extended play (EP), were shared on Moosewala's official social media and have quickly garnered millions of views on YouTube, with 'Take Notes' reaching over 8.5 million views. Shubhdeep Singh Sidhu, known as Sidhu Moosewala, was tragically killed in Mansa, Punjab, on 29 May, 2022. Despite his untimely death, his posthumous releases have increased to 11, starting with "SYL" in June 2022. His music continues to resonate with fans both in India and internationally, demonstrating his enduring legacy in the music industry. *—PTI*

Delhi sizzles as temp crosses 43°C mark

Yellow alert issued as city faces heatwave

NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

A girl plays with sprinklers at a lawn along Kartavya Path in New Delhi on Thursday PHOTO: PTI

The national capital continued to reel under intense heat as several parts of the city recorded a maximum temperature of over 43 degrees Celsius on Thursday.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), several weather stations across the city reported scorching daytime temperatures with Ayanagar recording the highest maximum temperature at 45.0 degree Celsius.

Intense heatwave for Delhi NCR with temperatures exceeding 45°C was forecast earlier. A yellow alert was issued for 12 June and 13.

Delhi along with north India may witness light to moderate rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds.

Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) stood at a moderate 186 on Thursday.

Severe heatwave conditions were reported at a few places in West Rajasthan, with particularly Ganganagar, Hanumangarh and Bikaner experiencing extreme temperatures. The highest maximum temperature in the country was reported in Rajasthan's Sri Ganganagarat 48.0 degree Celsius.

Heat wave conditions also prevailed in parts of Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh, and isolated pockets of East Rajasthan, South Uttar Pradesh, and Northwest Madhya Pradesh. *—PTI*

Downpour submerges parts of Hyderabad

DRF personnel clear flooding in key areas

BENGALURU, 12 JUNE

The IMD gas forecast heavy rains over south peninsular India from 12 June to 15 and in Konkan and Goa on 13 June and 14 PHOTO: ANI

Heavy rains lashed Hyderabad on 11 June, causing severe waterlogging in several areas and important roads. Disaster Response Force personnel could be seen clearing the water in areas like Santosh Nagar and Champapet.

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast very heavy rains at a few places and extremely heavy rains at isolated places over south peninsular India from 12 June to 15 and in Konkan and Goa on 13 June and 14.

May this year was the wettest for the country since 1901 with the country receiving an average rainfall of 126.7 mm. The onset of southwest monsoons early led to continuous heavy downpours across the southern and eastern states.

A seven-day warning for widespread rainfall was forecast in coastal and north interior Karnataka until 17 June. Hubballi in Dharwad district witnessed heavy rains on Thursday, with many areas being inundated. Widespread rainfall was forecast for districts in south interior Karnataka till 14 June.

Meanwhile, rains in Kerala are likely to intensify over the weekend, with red alerts being issued in various districts for three days from 14 June.

The IMD issued red alerts in Kannur and Kasaragod for 14 June, five districts on 15 June and three districts on 16 June. *—PTI*

Security personnel keep vigil after a violent clash between two groups went out of control at Rabindra Nagar area in South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal PHOTO: PTI

40 held for violence in clash over illegal construction in WB

KOLKATA, 12 JUNE

Violence erupted in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district on Wednesday following a clash between two groups over an alleged illegal construction on government land in Maheshtala, under the Rabindranagar Police Station area. The dispute, centred on setting up a shop and plantation activity, escalated into brickbatting, vandalism, and attacks on police personnel.

According to officials, 40 people have been arrested across seven cases, with law enforcement using "necessary force" to disperse the crowd.

At least five people, including police officers, were injured. Authorities have imposed prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and barred political leaders from visiting the area while the order remains in force.

The police warned against rumour-mongering on social media, stating that those attempting to incite unrest would face strict action. The situation is now said to be under control.

Meanwhile, in Odisha's Bhadrak district, tensions soared following the killing of 45-year-old Santosh Parida from Kasati village, allegedly for opposing cattle smuggling. He was attacked by members of a rival group. In response, the state deployed over 700 security personnel and suspended internet services in sensitive areas to prevent further escalation. *—Agencies*

Himanta to deport 'foreigners' despite NRC status

GUWAHATI, 12 JUNE

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said that the state government's current policy is to push back foreigners even if their names are found in the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

The way the NRC was carried out in Assam leaves a lot of scope for doubt, and it cannot be the only document for determining a person's citizenship, Sarma said.

The NRC was updated under the supervision of the Supreme Court and released on 31 August, 2019, leaving out more than 19 lakh applicants. However, it has not been notified by the Registrar General of India, leaving the controversial document without any official validity.

"Many people had entered their names in the NRC by using unfair means. So we have adopted the policy of pushing back (foreigners) if the authorities are absolutely convinced that the persons concerned are foreigners," the CM said in Darrang on Wednesday.

A large number of people have been picked up from across Assam since last month on suspicion of being doubtful citizens, as part of a nationwide drive, and many of them were pushed back to Bangladesh. Some of them returned after the neighbouring nation refused to accept them as their citizens. *—PTI*

SHIP BLAZE RAGES ON DAY-3

Operations continue on Thursday to contain the fire on board Singapore-flagged vessel MV Wan Hai 503, three days after a blaze erupted on the cargo ship following a container explosion off the Kerala coast PHOTO: PTI

ED raids in Rajasthan, Gujarat in ₹2,700 cr investors 'fraud'

NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday conducted extensive searches across Rajasthan and Gujarat as part of a money laundering probe linked to a Rs 2,700 crore investment scam involving Nexa Evergreen.

Acting under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), ED officials raided around 24 locations, including Sikar, Jaipur, Jodhpur, and Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan, as well as Ahmedabad in Gujarat. The raids were prompted by multiple FIRs filed by Rajasthan Police against the company.

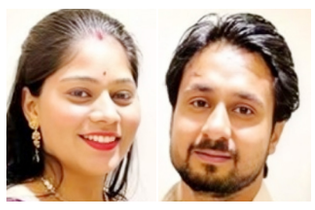
Nexa Evergreen is accused of defrauding over 62,000 investors by promising residential plots and low-cost flats in Dholera, Gujarat. In cases where plots were not available, investors were assured high-interest returns on their deposits. While a small number did receive land initially, they later discovered that they had been deceived.

Sources said the company amassed approximately Rs 2,700 crore through this fraudulent scheme. During the search operation, ED officials seized significant digital evidence and documentation relevant to the case.

The agency's probe aims to trace the money trail and identify assets acquired through illicit means. *—PTI*

Sonam's cousin paid hitmen to kill Raja Raghuvanshi: Police

BENGALURU/ MEGHALAYA, 12 JUNE



Sonam Raghuvanshi cousin, Jitendra Raghuvanshi reportedly paid the first installment of payment to the three hitmen, who had been tasked with murdering her husband, Raja Raghuvanshi in Meghalaya, police sources said. While five people, including Sonam, have been arrested, Jitendra is yet to be arrested in the chilling murder case.

Jitendra reportedly used his UPI account to pay the first installment of the Rs 20 lakh, which Sonam had promised to the hitmen.

However, it is yet to be ascertained whether Jitendra had paid the money to the hitmen before or after the murder.

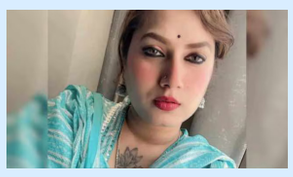
Meanwhile, the 'mangalsutra' and a ring found in the suitcase of Raja and Sonam helped investigators crack the honeymoon murder case.

The couple had checked into a homestay at Nongriat village in East Khasi Hills district, where the suitcase was found.

"A married woman leaving behind the ornaments gave us a clue to pursue her as a suspect in the case," a police official said. *—PTI*

Punjab influencer found dead in car in Bathinda

CHANDIGARH, 12 JUNE



Kanchan Kumari, a social media influencer from Punjab, was found dead in her car on Adesh University premises in Bathinda. She had been reported missing since 9 June.

Kanchan, who operated under the moniker 'Kamal Kaur Bhabhi' on Instagram, had amassed 3,84,000 followers and also ran YouTube channel, Funny Bhabhi TV, with 2,36,000 subscribers. She left her home in Ludhiana's Lachman Colony, on the pretext of attending a promotional event, but ceased communication thereafter. *—PTI*

Lokpal seeks CBI, ED officers to join its inquiry wing

NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

The Lokpal of India has invited applications from officers with experience in agencies such as the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Enforcement Directorate (ED) to join its inquiry wing on a deputation basis.

According to an official circular dated 10 June, posts are open for the roles of Deputy Director/ Superintendent of Police, Inquiry/Investigation Officer, Assistant Inquiry/ Investigation Officer, and Personal Assistant.

Eligible applicants include officers from central government services, the CBI, ED, Narcotics Control Bureau, Serious Fraud Investigation Office, and state or union territory police forces. Preference will be given to those with experience investigating general, economic, banking, or cybercrime cases.

The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 mandates the formation of an inquiry wing under Section 11 to conduct preliminary enquiries into alleged corruption by public servants.

Although the Act came into force in January 2014, the Lokpal began functioning only in March 2019. The decision to establish the inquiry wing was taken on 30 August, 2024.

Terms of deputation will follow existing central government rules. The deadline for applications is 60 days from the circular's issue date. *—PTI*

TWO RANKS LOWER IN A YEAR

India slips to 131 in Global Gender Gap Index '25

NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

India ranked 131 out of 148 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2025, which was released on Thursday.

With a parity score of just 64.1 per cent, India is among the lowest-ranked countries in South Asia.

India ranked 129 in 2024.

The Global Gender Gap Index measures gender parity across four key dimensions - economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment.

The Indian economy's overall performance improved by +0.3 points. Scores in labour force participation rate remained at 45.9 per cent.

In educational attainment India scored 97.1 per cent, reflecting positive shifts in female literacy and tertiary education enrolment.

India records higher parity in health and survival, driven by improved sex ratio at birth and in healthy life expectancy.

India records a slight drop in parity (-0.6 points) in political empowerment. Female representation in Parliament falls from 14.7 per cent to 13.8 per cent in 2025.

The share of women in ministerial roles falls from 6.5 per cent to 5.6 per cent.

Bangladesh ranked 24 globally, followed by Nepal at 125, Sri Lanka at 130, Bhutan at 119, Maldives at 138 and Pakistan at 148.

The global gender gap has closed to 68.8 per cent.

Iceland leads the rankings, followed by Finland, Norway, the United Kingdom and New Zealand.

The report revealed encouraging momentum and persistent structural barriers facing women worldwide.

There have been significant strides in political empowerment and economic participation, while educational attainment and health and survival maintained near-parity levels above 95 per cent.

Despite women representing 41.2 per cent of the global workforce, only 28.8 per cent women hold top leadership positions. *—PTI*

What is Gender Gap Index?

It measures gender equality in nations. It assesses countries on how well they are dividing their resources and opportunities, such as health and education, among their male and female populations

India sees growing gender gap

Total countries: 148

India's ranking:

2025	2024	2023
131	129	127

Rankings of other major nations:

1. Iceland	62. Ukraine
2. Finland	76. Israel
3. Norway	103. China
4. The UK	146. Chad
24. Bangladesh	147. Sudan
32. Canada	148. Pakistan
42. The US	

ENGINEERING MARVEL?

A newly constructed railway overbridge near Aishbagh Stadium, Bhopal, has taken a 90 degree turn, literally. The bridge is expected to be used by 3 lakh communters daily, but the sharp turn is raising eyebrows. According to the Public Works Department, there was no option for engineers due to the lack of land. Constructed at a cost of around Rs 18 crore, the 648-metre-long and 8.5-metre-wide bridge is nearing completion. ***PHOTO: PTI***

Air crash another blow to troubled Boeing

Boeing has struggled to cope with safety and quality control crisis for years now. It has lost billions of dollars following a strike by workers too, but Thursday's crash in Ahmedabad was a massive blow to the American company. The 787 Dreamliner, which was dubbed the safest Boeing aircraft so far, crashed to the ground, killing all but one onboard.

Here is a timeline of key events for Boeing in recent years:

December 2009: The 787 Dreamliner makes its first flight, taking off from Paine Field in Everett, Washington.

January 2013: 787s worldwide are grounded nearly three weeks after lithium ion batteries that are part of the planes led to a fire in one plane and smoke in a second.

August 2015: The first 737 Max plane rolls off the production line and within a year are undergoing flight tests.

29 Oct, 2018: Lion Air Flight 610, a Boeing 737 Max 8, plunges into the Java Sea off the coast of Indonesia minutes after takeoff from Jakarta, killing all 189 people on board. Questions arise over a new Boeing flight-control system called MCAS that Boeing did not disclose to pilots and airlines. Indonesian investigators say the Flight 610 pilots struggled for control as the automated system pushed the nose of the plane down more than two dozen times.

1 March, 2019: Wall Street remains enamoured with Boeing as commercial aircraft orders rocket. Shares of Boeing Co close at an all-time high of $430.35.

10 March, 2019: Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302, a Boeing 737 Max 8, crashes after takeoff from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, killing 157 passengers and crew members. Shares of Boeing begin a long, downward slide and have yet to recover.

Remains of the Air India plane that crashed moments after taking off from the Ahmedabad airport lies on a building in Ahmedabad on Thursday ***PHOTO: PTI***

March 2019: Within days of the second crash, the US Federal Aviation Administration and regulators in nations around the world order the grounding of all 737 Max jets.

23 Dec, 2019: Boeing ousts CEO Dennis Muilenburg, who was seen as pressuring the FAA to lift the Max grounding order.

7 Jan, 2021: US Justice Department charges Boeing with fraud but won't prosecute the company for misleading regulators about the 737 Max if it pays a $2.5 billion settlement.

5 Jan, 2024: A panel covering an unused emergency exit blows off a 737 Max 9 during an Alaska Airlines flight. Pilots land the plane safely.

26 Feb, 2024: A panel of outside experts, convened after the two deadly crashes, reports Boeing's safety culture falls short despite the company's efforts to fix it.

11 March, 2024: A LATAM Airlines Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner flight between Australia and New Zealand suddenly plunges, injuring 50 people. Boeing tells airlines to inspect switches on pilots' seats after a published report said an accidental cockpit seat movement likely cause the rapid loss of altitude.

25 March, 2024: Dave Calhoun, who replaced Muilenburg, says he will step down as CEO by year-end as part of a broader shakeup of Boeing leadership.

7 July, 2024: Boeing agrees to plead guilty to conspiracy to defraud the US government for misleading regulators who approved pilot-training standards for the Max.

31 July, 2024: Boeing names Kelly Ortberg as its new chief executive. Ortberg is a trained engineer and was CEO of aerospace supplier Rockwell Collins for eight years. Many see his appointment as an attempt by Boeing to get back to its roots.

13 Sept, 2024: About 33,000 Boeing factory workers walk off the job in a strike that will cripple production at one of the preeminent manufacturers in the US for almost two months. It is the first labour action taken against the company in 16 years.

23 May, 2025: The Justice Department reaches a deal with Boeing that takes criminal prosecution off the table for allegedly misleading regulators about the 737 Max jetliner before the two fatal planes crashes. Boeing agreed to pay or invest more than $1.1 billion, including an additional $445 million for crash victims' families, removing the risk of a criminal conviction that would have jeopardised the company's status as a federal contractor. *—PTI*

SALAR ساہر

RECALLING INDIA'S WORST AIR CRASHES

After a London-bound Air India aircraft crashed shortly after taking off from the Ahmedabad airport on Thursday, the spotlight is back on India's history with aviation disasters.

From deadly mid-air collisions and fatal crashes due to poor weather conditions to runway overshoots at tabletop airports, the country has witnessed several tragedies over the decades.

Here's a list of the most devastating air accidents in India's aviation history:

2020: During the Covid-19 pandemic, Air India Express Flight 1344, operating as part of the Vande Bharat repatriation mission, skidded off the runway while landing at the Kozhikode (Calicut) International Airport on 7 August. Amid heavy rainfall, the aircraft overshot the wet tabletop runway, plunged into a valley and split into two. Of the 190 people on board, 21, including two pilots, lost their lives.

2010: Air India Express Flight 812 overshot the runway while landing at the Mangaluru International Airport in Karnataka on 22 May, 2010. The Boeing 737-800, coming from Dubai, plunged into a gorge beyond the tabletop runway and burst into flames, killing 158 people. The tragic incident brought increased scrutiny to India's tabletop airports and landing protocols during adverse conditions.

2000: Alliance Air Flight 7412 crashed into a densely populated residential area in Bihar's Patna while attempting to land on 17 July. The Boeing 737-200 experienced a stall at low altitude due to the reported improper handling during the final approach. Sixty people were killed, including five on the ground. The accident prompted upgrades to approach procedures at smaller urban airports.

1996: On 12 November, 349 people were killed in what became India's most devastating aviation disaster. It occurred when Saudia Flight 763, a Boeing 747, and Kazakhstan Airlines Flight 1907, an Ilyushin Il-76, collided mid-air near Charkhi Dadri in Haryana. The accident was the result of a communication failure and the Kazakh crew descending below their assigned altitude. Following the incident, India introduced significant aviation safety measures, including mandating the installation of Traffic Collision Avoidance Systems (TCAS) on all commercial aircraft

1990: On 14 February Indian Airlines Flight 605 crashed while approaching Bengaluru's HAL Airport, killing 92 of the 146 people on board. The Airbus A320, a relatively new aircraft in India at the time, descended too low and hit the ground short of the runway, skidding onto a golf course. The investigation revealed that pilot error and unfamiliarity with the advanced digital cockpit of the A320 contributed to the tragic accident.

1988: Amid poor visibility on 19 October, Indian Airlines Flight 113, a Boeing 737-200, crashed on its approach to Ahmedabad Airport. The flight, arriving from Mumbai, struck trees and crashed short of the runway, killing 133 of the 135 people on board. Investigators pointed to pilot error, inadequate weather information, and procedural lapses by air traffic control.

1978: On 1 January, Dubai-bound Air India Flight 855, a Boeing 747, plunged into the Arabian Sea shortly after taking off from Mumbai, killing all 213 people on board. The disaster occurred only 101 seconds into the flight when a faulty Attitude Director Indicator led the captain to misinterpret the aircraft's orientation. The crash took place in nighttime conditions over the sea, contributing to the crew's spatial disorientation.

1973: On 31 May, Indian Airlines Flight 440 crashed during its approach to Delhi's Palam Airport. The Boeing 737-200 encountered severe weather and struck high-tension wires just short of the runway. Of the 65 people on board, 48 died. Among the dead was prominent Indian politician Mohan Kumaramangalam. The crash underscored the need for improved weather radar at Indian airports. *—PTI*

A damaged part of the Air India plane in Ahmedabad on Thursday ***PHOTO: PTI***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

India is becoming more vulnerable to extreme weather, here's how

Extreme weather events like floods, heatwaves and cyclones are happening more frequently in India, with widespread negative impacts on health, development, and the economy.

An annual report on the state of India's environment released last week by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), a New Delhi-based public interest research and advocacy organization, shows how the extreme weather affects large parts of India's population.

The report showed that nearly 3,000 people died, 2 million hectares of crops were ruined, and 80,000 homes were destroyed in extreme weather-related events last year. It also showed that extreme weather events happened somewhere in India on 88 per cent of days in 2024.

CSE director Sunita Narain said that the latest report should be a wake-up call for policymakers.

"This report is important and emphasizes the urgent need for stronger environmental governance, improved health care infrastructure, and ambitious climate policies to address these interconnected crises," Narain said.

Large cities frequently experience the worst air quality levels of anywhere in the world.

Nearly 3,000 people died, 2 Mhectares of crops were ruined, and 80,000 homes were destroyed in extreme weather-related events last year ***PHOTO: PTI***

Since 2021, residents in 13 Indian cities, including Delhi, have breathed unsafe air one in every three days, according to the report. Life expectancy in Delhi is nearly eight years shorter due to air pollution, according to various studies.

Even though the main summer months — from April to June — are always hot in India, temperatures have grown more extreme in the past decade. The intensity of rain and flooding has also increased.

About 80 per cent of the population lives in regions that are considered vulnerable to disasters such as heat waves or severe flooding, the report said.

"This report lays bare an uncomfortable truth. India is in the eye of a perfect storm where climate chaos, health crises, and development shortfalls are colliding," Abinash Mohanty, head of climate change and sustainability at IPE Global, an international development organisation, told DW.

Mohanty said that the data found in the report corresponds with the key findings from IPE Global's study in 2024, which showed that 80 per cent of districts in India are susceptible to extreme weather events.

"This is more than a statistical alarm, it is a lived crisis unfolding in real time," he said. Mohanty added that India's development model needs to be "radically reimagined" to adapt to hotter temperatures, biodiversity loss, and water emergencies."

"The consequences of inaction today will become irreversible realities tomorrow," he said.

What actions can the government take?

Narain from the CSE said the government can do more to help develop adaptation strategies by investing in data collection.

"The report does not discount the enormous strides that India has made in many fields. What it essentially does is hold up a mirror and make us acquainted with the fact that we need to sit back and take note of the trends, make sense of them, and initiate corrective actions," said Narain.

"Unless we have clear, credible data, there can be no solutions or policies. Our strong plea therefore is that we need more, not less data. We need to be transparent," said Narain.

Akshay Deoras, a climate scientist at the University of Reading, told DW that the CSE report should shake Indian policymakers, industries, and citisens out of being complacent about the impacts of climate change.

"Climate resilience is no longer optional — it's an existential imperative," Deoras said.

Deoras added that he believes India must move from reactive relief to anticipatory planning and from climate rhetoric to grounded, scalable action through establishment of climate risk observatories.

"The clock is ticking — and there are no second chances," said Deoras.

"This report lays bare the accelerating impact of climate change on India. Experiencing extreme weather on so many days in a year is not a statistical fluke — it signals a shifting baseline," he added.

This will lead to compounded effects like crop losses, rising displacement, and biodiversity stress.

"Without an immediate investment in adaptation, early warning systems, and reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases, we are heading toward a destabilized climate future, especially for the next generation," said Deoras.

—DW NEWS

Third suspect held over alleged Poland attack plot

WARSAW, 12 JUNE

A 19-year-old man has been detained by Polish security services on suspicion of planning a terrorist attack, becoming the third arrest in an ongoing investigation in Olsztyn, northeastern Poland. The Internal Security Agency said the suspect, along with two others previously arrested, had collected materials on firearms, explosives, and combat tactics. Prosecutors allege the group trained at shooting ranges and took part in paramilitary-style exercises. Investigators believe the suspects were influenced by notorious mass killers Anders Breivik, Brenton Tarrant, and Timothy McVeigh. The young men reportedly analysed those attacks in depth, focusing on their execution and errors. Authorities said the content they consumed fostered "extremely radical moral attitudes." —PTI

PHOTO: X

Social media firms liable for illegal content: Brazil SC

BRASILIA, 12 JUNE

Brazil's Supreme Court has ruled that social media companies can be held liable for illegal content posted by users, marking a significant shift in Latin America's approach to digital regulation. In a majority vote, six of 11 justices backed the move, allowing companies like Meta, X, and Microsoft to be sued or fined. The decision follows growing concerns over online fraud, child exploitation, and violent content. Justice Flávio Dino cited social media's role in inspiring school shootings, while dissenting Justice André Mendonça warned the ruling could harm free speech. The change aligns Brazil with the EU's stricter tech regulations. **—PTI**

Indian-origin doctor becomes AMA President

NEW YORK, 12 JUNE

Dr Bobby Mukkamala has been sworn in as the 180th president of the American Medical Association (AMA), becoming the first physician of Indian origin to lead the organisation. An otolaryngologist from Flint, Michigan, Mukkamala has been active in the AMA since his residency and currently chairs its Substance Use and Pain Care Task Force. Diagnosed with an 8-cm brain tumour last November, he reflected, "A few months ago, I didn't know if this night would even be possible." The son of Indian immigrant physicians, Mukkamala led efforts during Flint's water crisis and chaired the Community Foundation of Greater Flint. A University of Michigan Medical School graduate, he also served on the AMA Board of Trustees and chaired its science council.**—PTI**

Chinese fighter jets fly close to Japanese planes

TOKYO, 12 JUNE

Japan and China blamed each other on Thursday after Tokyo raised concern that a Chinese fighter jet came dangerously close to Japanese reconnaissance planes. The Chinese fighter jets took off from one of two Chinese aircraft carriers that were operating together for the first time in the Pacific, Japan's Defence Ministry said. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi told reporters that Japan conveyed its "serious concern" to China that such close encounters could cause accidental collisions. According to Japan, a Chinese J-15 fighter jet took off from the Shandong aircraft carrier on Saturday and chased a Japanese P-3C aircraft on reconnaissance duty, coming within an "abnormally close distance" of 45 metres (50 yards) for about 40 minutes. **—PTI**

Iran tension: US pulls out troops from Middle East

Sources say Trump doesn't want to support Israel's strike on Iran

WASHINGTON/ TEL AVIV/ TEHRAN, 12 JUNE

President Donald Trump said that Iran led by Seyyed Ali Hosseini Khameneh's cannot have nuclear weapons **PHOTO: PTI AND WIKICOMMONS**

The United States is drawing down troops, non-essential staff and their families from Bahrain and Kuwait amid rising tensions in the Middle East, citing potential regional unrest. The State Department and Pentagon authorised the voluntary departure on Wednesday, allowing affected personnel to leave at government expense.

President Donald Trump, addressing the decision, stated: "They are being moved out because it could be a dangerous place, and we'll see what happens. They can't have a nuclear weapon. Very simple."

The move follows reports from NBC News and CBS News that Israel may launch a unilateral strike against Iran's nuclear infrastructure within days, over fears that the US might agree to a deal falling short of demands to halt all uranium enrichment. Sources confirmed the US has no plans to support such a strike, but remains on high alert.

Iranian Defence Minister Aziz Nasirzadeh warned that any strike would provoke retaliation against US bases in the region. A senior Iranian official told The New York Times that Iran has prepared a massive missile counter-strike plan against Israel.

This comes after an October missile barrage on Israel by Iran, which was largely intercepted with help from US and regional allies. Israel's response damaged Iran's air defence systems, prompting speculation that Israel may act before Tehran completes repairs.

Despite mounting hostility, Oman's Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi confirmed that Muscat will host a sixth round of nuclear talks between the US and Iran this Sunday. US Special Envoy Steve Witkoff is expected to meet Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi to discuss Tehran's response to Washington's latest proposal.

In Vienna, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) board of governors on Thursday formally found Iran non-compliant with its nuclear obligations for the first time in 20 years. The resolution, backed by the US, UK, France, and Germany, urges Tehran to cooperate with investigations into undeclared nuclear sites. In response, Iran announced plans to establish a new uranium enrichment facility in a "secure location" and warned of further measures. Witkoff called Iran "an existential threat" to Israel and vowed: "We must ensure Iran never obtains the means to achieve its deadly ambitions." *—Agencies*

The vote was the most serious challenge to Benjamin Netanyahu's government since Hamas' 7 October, 2023, attack **PHOTO: X**

Netanyahu survives attempt to dissolve Israel's Parliament

JERUSALEM, 12 JUNE

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government survived an attempt to dissolve parliament on Thursday morning, with most of his ultra-Orthodox coalition partners joining him in voting against a bill that would have forced them to register for military service while the country is at war.

The vote was the most serious challenge to Netanyahu's government since Hamas' 7 October, 2023, attack, the biggest security failure in Israel's history and the trigger for the ongoing war in Gaza.

The bill's failure means that no other bill to dissolve Knesset can be submitted for at least six months, shoring up Netanyahu's embattled coalition.

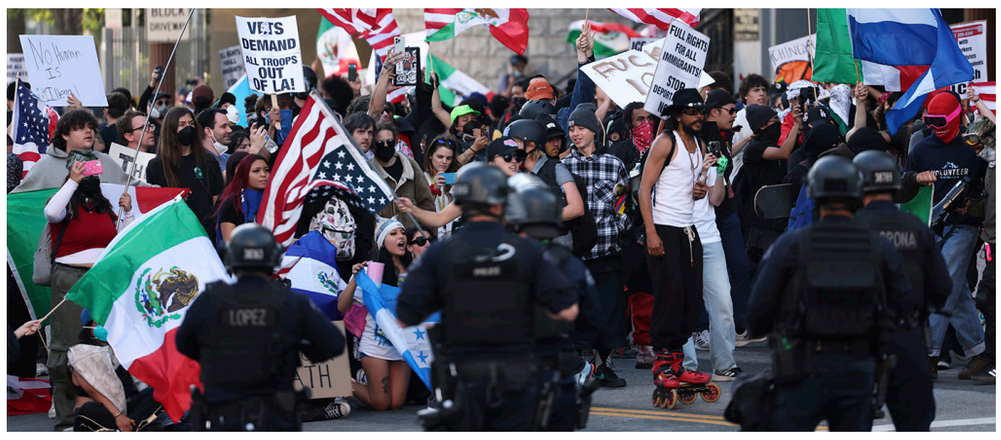
The ultra-Orthodox parties are furious that the government has failed to pass a law exempting their community from mandatory military service. The issue has long divided the Jewish Israeli public, especially during the latest war.

Israel's opposition had hoped that the public anger over the exemptions would help topple the government. But just two of the 18 ultra-Orthodox members of the Knesset, Israel's parliament, supported the bill to dissolve.

Most agreed to vote against the bill after Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee Chairman Yuli Edelstein said he and the ultra-Orthodox parties had reached an understanding on the basis of a new draft law, which they will continue discussing over the coming week.

Military service is mandatory for most Jews in Israel, but the politically powerful ultra-Orthodox, who make up roughly 13 per cent of Israeli society, have traditionally received exemptions if they are studying full-time in religious seminaries. *—PTI*

OVER 400 HELD IN 6 DAYS



Law enforcement officers stand guard as demonstrators protest in Los Angeles on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

LAPD arrests 600 in drive to quell immigration protests

LOS ANGELES, 12 JUNE

The Los Angeles Police Department has made nearly 600 arrests and detentions since Saturday in connection to immigration protests. The vast majority arrests have been made for failing to leave the area in defiance of requests from law enforcement, according to police.

There have been a handful of more serious charges including for assault against police officers and for possession of a Molotov cocktail and a gun.

US troops have also begun directly detaining immigrants accused of trespassing on a recently designated national defence zone along the southern US border, authorities said on Wednesday.

California Democratic Governor Gavin Newsom said President Donald Trump's military intervention at protests over federal immigration policy in Los Angeles is assault on democracy and that he has sued to try to stop it.

A federal court will hear on Thursday Newsom's emergency motion requesting its intervention after President Donald Trump ordered the deployment of roughly 4,000 National Guard members and 700 Marines to Los Angeles.

Texas Republican Governor Greg Abbott is putting the National Guard on standby in areas in his state where demonstrations are planned.

The approaches illustrate the ways the two parties are trying to navigate national politics and the role of executive power in enforcing immigration policies. *—PTI*

Over 122M forcibly displaced worldwide: UN

GENEVA, 12 JUNE

The number of people forcibly displaced by war, violence and persecution has risen to over 122 million globally, said the UN refugee agency's latest Global Trends Report released on Thursday.

The figure, accurate as of April 2025, marks an increase of around 2 million from the previous year and nearly double the number recorded a decade ago. Among the displaced, 73.5 million are internally displaced within their own countries — a rise of over 9 per cent from last year.

UNHCR chief Filippo Grandi acknowledged the ongoing crisis but noted some "rays of hope," such as the return of nearly 2 million Syrians to their homeland as the country gradually recovers from years of civil war.

Sudan now hosts the world's largest displacement crisis, with over 14 million people uprooted by its ongoing civil conflict — overtaking Syria's 13.5 million. Afghanistan accounts for over 10 million displaced, while Ukraine has around 8.8 million forcibly displaced individuals. *—PTI*

12 ISRAELI FIGHTERS KILLED: HAMAS

Smoke rises to the sky following an Israeli strike in the Gaza Strip as seen from southern Israel, **PHOTO: PTI**

CAIRO, 12 JUNE

A unit of the Hamas-run police force said it killed 12 members of an Israeli-backed militia after detaining them on Thursday morning in the Gaza Strip. Hours earlier, an Israel-supported aid group said Hamas attacked a bus carrying its Palestinian workers, killing at least five of them.

The militia, led by Yasser Abu Shabab, said its fighters had attacked Hamas and killed five militants but made no mention of its own casualties. It also accused Hamas of detaining and killing aid workers. It was not immediately possible to verify the competing claims or confirm the identities of those killed.

The Israeli military circulated the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation statement on its social media accounts but declined to provide its own account of what happened.

Op in Southern Syria

Meanwhile, Syria TV, a Damascus-based news channel, reported that a force of about 100 Israeli troops stormed the southern Syrian village of Beit Jin near the border with Lebanon and called the names of several people through loud speakers who were detained. Syria TV said one person was shot dead by the Israeli force.

The military said the detained people were Hamas members who were planning attacks against Israel, and that they were taken to Israel for questioning, adding that it also found weapons in the area. *—PTI*

55,000 Palestinians killed in Israel–Hamas war, say Gaza health officials

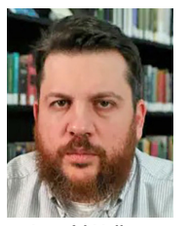
Navalny ally gets 18 yrs jail amid dissident crackdown

MOSCOW, 12 JUNE

A Russian military court has sentenced Leonid Volkov, a key ally of the late opposition leader Alexei Navalny, to 18 years in prison in absentia, intensifying Moscow's sweeping crackdown on dissent.

Volkov, who now lives abroad, was convicted on 40 charges including justifying terrorism, financing extremism, and rehabilitating Nazism. He was also fined 2 million rubles (approx. USD 25,000) and banned from using the internet for 10 years.

Mocking the ruling, Volkov posted online: "Damn. Whatever am I going to do?"



Leonid Volkov **PHOTO: X**

Formerly head of Navalny's regional operations and Anti-Corruption Foundation, Volkov fled Russia years ago under official pressure. His case is widely seen as politically motivated.

Separately, Lev Shlosberg, a senior figure in the Yabloko opposition party, was placed under house arrest in Pskov for allegedly discrediting the Russian army.

The charge relates to a ceasefire appeal linked to Russia's war in Ukraine, though Shlosberg denies posting the content. If convicted, he faces up to five years in prison. *—PTI*

Sudan's RSF seizes key area near Libya, Egypt

CAIRO, 12 JUNE

Sudan's Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have claimed control of a strategic triangular area along the borders with Libya and Egypt, intensifying the two-year conflict with the Sudanese military.

In a statement on Wednesday, the RSF announced they had captured the key zone, strengthening their grip on Sudan's volatile western frontier with Libya. Hours earlier, the military said it had evacuated the area as part of a "defensive arrangement to repel aggression."

The army also accused Libyan commander Khalifa Hifter's forces of aiding the RSF assault in "blatant aggression against Sudan, its land, and its people." Hifter's forces, which control eastern and southern Libya, denied involvement, calling the claims an attempt to "export Sudan's internal crisis and create a virtual external enemy."

The border seizure marks a significant development in Sudan's civil war, which erupted in April 2023 following a power struggle between the army and RSF. The conflict has claimed at least 24,000 lives—likely more—and displaced over 13 million people, including 4 million refugees.

The UN and rights groups have documented widespread atrocities, particularly in Darfur. *—PTI*

INDIANS NABBED IN OP PELICAN

Khalistani link to 7 drug smugglers held in Canada

ONTARIO, 12 JUNE

Seven Indian-origin men with alleged Khalistani links were among nine people arrested in Canada's Ontario over the alleged smuggling of cocaine and possession of arms, police said on Thursday.

The arrested followed a year-long probe under the country's project 'Pelican'. The sleuths seized 479 kg of cocaine valued at CAD $50 million (approximately Rs 299.3 crore in Indian currency), they said.

Peel Regional Police told media persons that the gang was trying to smuggle the cocaine into Toronto from the US and the drug trafficking network was linked to anti-India activities and had Khalistani links, according to sources.

The probe found the network exploited commercial trucking routes between the US and Canada to transport narcotics. They have ties to Mexican cartels and US-based distributors, the Peel police said.

Canadian police have 479 kg of cocaine valued at CAD $50 million (approximately Rs 299.3 crore) **PHOTO: X PEEL REGIONAL POLICE**

The investigation into the cocaine smuggling operation started in June 2024. Between February and May 2025, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) intercepted a commercial truck at the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor, which led to the seizure of 127kg cocaine concealed in the trailer and the arrest of the driver.

Authorities also intercepted another truck at the Blue Water Bridge in Point Edward and seized 50kg of cocaine hidden in the trailer, The driver was arrested.

Additional seizures were also made across the GTA in connection with commercial trucking by Peel Regional Police, some of which included individuals in possession of loaded firearms at the time of arrest. *—Agencies*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Gold jumps Rs 850 to Rs 99,340/10 g

NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

Gold prices jumped Rs 850 to Rs 99,340 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday amid a rise in precious metal prices in the overseas markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The yellow metal of 99.5 per cent purity climbed Rs 800 to Rs 98,800 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). The most traded gold contracts for August delivery bounced by Rs 1,585 to trade at Rs 98,289 per 10 grams. Subsequently, the contracts for October delivery rallied Rs 1,520 to Rs 99,214 per 10 grams on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX). Meanwhile, spot gold increased by USD 15.74 per ounce or 0.47 per cent to USD 3,370.87 per ounce in the international markets. *—PTI*

Rupee falls 7 paise to settle at 85.60 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 12 JUNE

The rupee declined 7 paise to close to 85.60 against the US dollar on Thursday amid a steep fall in the domestic equity markets and a rise in global crude oil prices. However, a weaker dollar against major currencies capped the losses, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 85.43 against the US dollar and traded in the range of 85.43-85.65 before closing at 85.60 (provisional), down 7 paise from its previous close. The local unit had settled at 85.53 on Wednesday. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was down 0.43 per cent at 99.20. *—PTI*

Vegetable oil imports decline for 6th straight month

NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

India's vegetable oil imports plummeted by 22.36 per cent year-on-year in May, falling to 1.187 million tonnes, marking the sixth consecutive month of decline, according to the Solvent Extractors Association (SEA). The total imports for the first seven months of the 2024-25 oil year reached 7.884 million tonnes, down from 8.678 million tonnes last year. The government recently slashed the basic import duty on palm, soybean, and sunflower oils from 20 per cent to 10 per cent, reducing the overall duty from 27.5 per cent to 16.5 per cent. However, SEA predicts this will not significantly impact import, expecting a shift towards crude palm oil and encouraging domestic refining. As of 1 June, India held edible oil stocks of 1.333 million tonnes amidst declining imports from major suppliers. *—PTI*

Ola's Krutrim launches agentic AI assistant Kruti

NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

Ola group's AI arm Krutrim on Thursday launched its own agentic AI assistant 'Kruti', designed to execute tasks such as cab booking, food ordering, bill payments, image creation, and in-depth research. The company claims Kruti is the first AI assistant in India to move beyond passive chatbot responses, offering proactive task completion and advanced reasoning capabilities. Kruti supports both voice and text inputs, can remember previous user interactions, and adapts responses based on user preferences, according to a company statement. The assistant operates in 13 Indian languages and is optimised for mobile use. The assistant also integrates with various apps and services, providing context-aware assistance and reducing the need for users to switch between multiple apps. *—PTI*

Retail inflation declines to over 6-yr low in May

NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

Retail inflation dipped to an over six-year low of 2.82 per cent in May mainly due to subdued prices of food items, including vegetables, fruits, and protein-rich items, showed government data released on Thursday.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based retail inflation was 3.16 per cent in April and 4.8 per cent in May 2024.

Food inflation was at 0.99 per cent in May, significantly down from 8.69 per cent in the year-ago month, according to data of the National Statistics Office (NSO). It declined by 79 basis points in May compared to April.

The food inflation in May 2025 is the lowest since October 2021.

Headline inflation in rural sector sat at 2.59 per cent in May as compared to 2.92 per cent in April. Whereas the headline Urban inflation declined from 3.36 per cent in April to 3.07 per cent in May.

Among states and UTs, the highest inflation was recorded in Kerala at 6.46 per cent, followed by Punjab (5.21 per cent), Jammu and Kashmir (4.55 per cent), Haryana (3.67 per cent) and Uttarakhand (3.47 per cent).

The lowest inflation was in Telangana at 0.55 per cent.

Housing inflation for May was at 3.16 per cent as compared with 3.06 per cent in April. Inflation in education was observed at 4.34 per cent in May as compared with 4.13 per cent in April.

Combined Health inflation for urban and rural areas in May was recorded at 4.34 per cent in May versus 4.25 per cent in April.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which has been tasked by the government to ensure retail inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side, has projected CPI inflation for 2025-26 at 3.7 per cent, with Q1 at 2.9 per cent, Q2 at 3.4 per cent, Q3 at 3.9 per cent, and Q4 at 4.4 per cent.

Combined transport and communication sector inflation for rural and urban areas also rose from 3.67 percent in April to 3.85 percent in May 2025. The combined fuel and light inflation was, however, recorded lower at 2.78 per cent in May as compared with 2.92 per cent in April. *—PTI/ANI*

Fin Min clarifies: No MDR on UPI transactions

Calls the reports 'completely false, baseless and misleading'

NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

The finance ministry has said no Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) will be levied on transactions through Unified Payments Interface platforms.

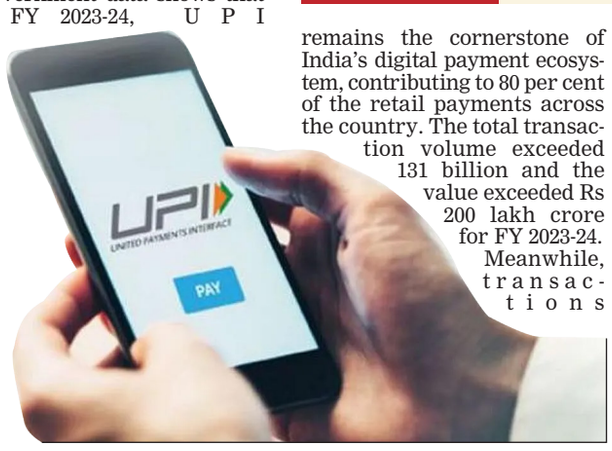
"Speculation and claims that the MDR will be charged on UPI transactions are completely false, baseless, and misleading," the ministry said in a post on X on Wednesday.

"Such baseless and sensation-creating speculations cause needless uncertainty, fear and suspicion among our citizens. The government remains fully committed to promoting digital payments via UPI," it said.

MDR is the cost paid by a merchant to a bank for accepting payment from their customers via digital means. The merchant discount rate is expressed in percentage of the transaction amount.

The ministry's clarification came following reports that the government was planning to impose MDR on large-ticket UPI transactions. The reports stemmed from the Payments Council of India's letter to the government in March, requesting them for the same to meet to help balance the costs of UPI charges.

Government data shows that for FY 2023-24, UPI remains the cornerstone of India's digital payment ecosystem, contributing to 80 per cent of the retail payments across the country. The total transaction volume exceeded 131 billion and the value exceeded Rs 200 lakh crore for FY 2023-24.



Meanwhile, transactions through UPI touched a record high of Rs 25.14 lakh crore in May, recording a growth of 5 per cent over the preceding month, according to data released by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). he UPI transactions value was Rs 23.94 lakh crore in April.

In terms of volume, 1,867.7 crore transactions were done in May against 1,789.3 crore in the previous month.

NPCI said the value of the transactions last month was 23 per cent higher as compared to Rs 20.44 lakh crore in the year-ago period. *—PTI*

Paytm shares tank 10 pc

Shares of One97 Communications, the owner of Paytm brand, on Thursday tumbled 10 per cent, despite the government's clarification on Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) on large-ticket UPI transactions. The stock tanked 9.99 per cent to Rs 864.20 on the BSE. At the NSE, it dropped 10 per cent to Rs 864.40.

Markets tumble 1% amid geopolitical tensions

MUMBAI, 12 JUNE

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tanked 1 per cent on Thursday, in tandem with weak global market trends amid growing tensions in the Middle East.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 823.16 points or 1 per cent to settle at 81,691.98. During the day, it plunged 991.98 points or 1.20 per cent to 81,523.16.

The broader NSE Nifty tumbled 253.20 points or 1.01 per cent to 24,888.20.

Fresh foreign fund outflows also dented investors' sentiment, traders said.

From the Sensex firms, Tata Motors, Titan, Eternal, Power Grid, Tata Steel, Larsen & Toubro, Mahindra & Mahindra and Hindustan Unilever were among the biggest laggards.

Bajaj Finserv, Asian Paints and Tech Mahindra were the gainers.

Investors' wealth eroded by Rs 5.98 lakh crore. *—PTI*

Indian oil companies rise slightly

Amid rising geopolitical tensions over oil, global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 1.43 per cent while Indian oil companies gained slightly. ONGC and Oil India share prices gained up to 5 per cent in eary trade. ONGC was up by 0.23 per cent at closing, while Oil India grew by 0.66 per cent at closing.

India's exports may cross $900B this year: Goyal

STOCKHOLM, 12 JUNE

India's goods and services exports during 2025-26 are expected to cross USD 900 billion despite the global economic uncertainties, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has said.

"We have crossed USD 825 billion exports last year, we are surely to cross USD 900 billion this year in all this global turmoil," he has said here while addressing the Indian business delegation last night.

Despite uncertainties due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Israel-Hamas war and the Red Sea crisis, India's overall exports touched an all-time high of USD 825 billion in 2024-25.

Goyal also said finding solutions to address non-tariff barriers would be important for the proposed FTA between India and the EU and both sides are actively working on resolving these issues.

"Significant progress has been made. More than half the chapters are ready. In terms of content, I would say we are almost 90 per cent ready for market access," Goyal said. "Unless countries recognise that over regulation and barriers to trade will be met with reciprocal action, everybody suffers. We are committed to deregulation, to finding solutions to the high cost of regulation, the non-tariff barriers that these regulations cause and the impediments to free trade."

Marie Sandin, MD of TetraPak Sweden with Union Minister Piyush Goyal *PHOTO: X*

Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade Benjamin Dousa had earlier said the FTA should tackle both tariff and non-tariff barriers to maximise benefits for both regions, Wednesday.

The minister said India is open to mutually beneficial arrangements on implementing norms related quality standards. *—Agencies*

M'rashtra booze sales to decline due to duty increase: CIABC

NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

The recent hike in the excise duty by the Maharashtra government will push the IMFL whisky MRP by about 85 per cent, which will lead to a significant drop in sales volumes, industry body CIABC said.

Expressing concerns over the recent Maharashtra Cabinet decision to hike excise duty on Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL), CIABC said it could severely disrupt the market, erode the competitiveness of national brands, and jeopardise the availability of legitimate alcoholic beverages in the state.

On the other hand, the Brewers Association of India (BAI) voiced its support for the decision to increase excise duty on IMFL while maintaining the current rate on beer. BAI argued that taxes on beer in the state are already disproportionately high compared to other markets.

The association, which includes leading players like United Breweries, Anheuser-Busch InBev, and Carlsberg, noted that while excise duty on beer has risen by 32 per cent over the past decade, the rate for IMFL has only increased by 9 per cent. This resulted in beer prices that can exceed those of IMFL by up to 50 per cent. *—PTI/ANI*

AMID CHINESE TRADE CONCERNS

India might run out of rare earth magnets by mid-July

NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

Rare-earth magnet inventories are likely to 'taper off' by mid-July 2025 for the automobile industry, weighed down by the export restrictions from China and ensuing shipment delays, according to a release by rating agency ICRA.

"With China tightening export controls and delaying shipment clearances, rare earth magnet inventories are projected to last only until mid-July 2025 for several, if not all, passenger vehicle and two-wheeler applications," Jitin Makkar, Senior Vice President and Group Head - Corporate Ratings, ICRA Limited.

90% of global processing

capacity for rare earth magnets are in China.

Magnets are used across sectors including automobiles, home appliances and clean energy.

The industry is looking for contingency options and alternative supply chains, but it is riddled with difficulties.

"While the automobile industry is exploring a range of contingency options, each of these appears ridden with logistical, regulatory, and engineering complexities, exacerbating the prevailing uncertainty," the rating agency said.

"India imported around USD 200 million worth of these magnets for both automotive and non-automotive applications, with approximately 85 per cent of this sourced from China." Makkar added. *—ANI*

Maruti Suzuki exploring alternates

Maruti Suzuki India on Thursday said it is exploring multiple solutions to ensure continuity in its manufacturing operations amid the ongoing rare earth magnet shortage issue. The country's largest carmaker noted that there is a lot of uncertainty due to the situation, but so far, there is no impact on its manufacturing activities. If and when there is any material impact to the company's business, the automaker will inform all stakeholders, it said. *—PTI*

1ST BIG HOLLYWOOD CASE

Disney, Universal join AI copyright suits

NEW YORK, 12 JUNE

Disney and Universal have filed a copyright lawsuit against popular artificial intelligence image-generator Midjourney on Wednesday, making them the first major Hollywood companies to enter a legal battle over generative AI.

Filed in a federal district court in Los Angeles, the complaint claims Midjourney pirated the libraries of the two Hollywood studios to generate and distribute "endless unauthorised copies" of their famed characters, such as Darth Vader from Star Wars and the Minions from Despicable Me.

The studios also claimed the San Francisco-based AI company ignored their requests to stop infringing on their copyrighted works and to take technological measures to halt such image generation.

Midjourney did not immediately comment on the issue.

In 2022, Midjourney CEO David Holz described his image-making service as "like a search engine" pulling in a wide swath of images from across the internet.

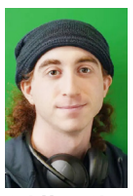
The Recording Industry Association of America, which is engaged in its own legal battles against AI companies, came out in support of Disney and Universal's lawsuit.

Major AI developers do not typically disclose their data sources but have argued that taking troves of publicly accessible online text, images and other media to train their AI systems is protected by the "fair use" doctrine of American copyright law.

The case joins a growing number of lawsuits against AI platforms — such as OpenAI and Anthropic.

Meanwhile, the first major copyright trial of the generative AI industry is underway in London, pitting Getty Images against Stability AI. *—PTI*

Can a person look at somebody else's picture and learn from it and make a similar picture? Obviously... To the extent that AIs are learning like people, it's sort of the same thing and if the images come out differently then it seems like it's fine.



-David Holz, Midjourney CEO

Midjourney is the quintessential copyright free-rider and a bottomless pit of plagiarism. Piracy is piracy, and whether an infringing image or video is made with AI or another technology does not make it any less infringing.

-Disney and Universal's complaint

Researchers identify security leak in Microsoft AI

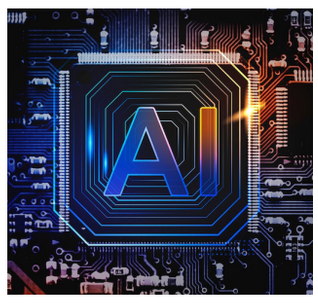
NEW YORK, 12 JUNE

Cybersecurity researchers identified a major security flaw called EchoLeak in a Microsoft 365 Copilot AI agent. EchoLeak allowed attackers to silently steal sensitive data from a user's environment by simply sending them an email.

No clicks, downloads, or user actions were needed, making it the first-ever zero-click AI vulnerability affecting a large language model-based assistant

The issue was uncovered by researchers at Aim Labs in January 2025 and reported to Microsoft. In May, the tech giant fixed the flaw server-side, meaning users didn't need to take any action.

Microsoft said that no customers were impacted, and there is no evidence that the flaw was used in real-world attacks. Microsoft said it has updated products to mitigate the issue. The company is also implementing defense-in-depth measures to make further enhancements to its security posture.



EchoLeak targeted how Microsoft 365 Copilot, which is built into Office apps like Word, Excel, Outlook, and Teams, processes information from emails and documents when answering user questions. *—Agencies*

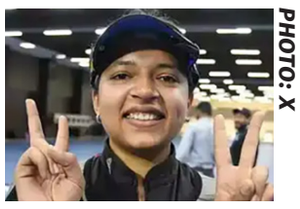


PHOTO: X

ISSF World Cup: Sift Kaur Samra wins bronze

MUNICH, 12 JUNE

Top Indian shooter Sift Kaur Samra tackled a strong field with aplomb to claim the bronze medal in the women's 50m rifle 3 positions event at the ISSF World Cup here on Thursday. The 23-year-old Samra, who holds the current world record in women's 50 metre rifle three positions event which she had set while winning the gold medal at the 2022 Asian Games, shot 453.1 in the eight-player final. Norway's Jeanette Hegg Duestad won the gold medal with 466.9, while Emely Jaeggi of Switzerland bagged silver with 464.8. Emely was placed ninth in the qualifications with 590 but made the final as two markswomen among the top eight were shooting for ranking points only (RPO).—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

England tour: Radha replaces injured Shuchi

MUMBAI, 12 JUNE

Left-arm spinner Radha Yadav on Thursday replaced injured Shuchi Upadhyay in the India women's squad for their upcoming tour of England for five T20Is and three ODIs starting on 28 June. The BCCI informed in a statement that the 20-year-old left-arm spinner Upadhyay, who made her ODI debut last month during the tri-series in Sri Lanka, has sustained a left shin injury. "The Women's Selection Committee has named Radha as a replacement for Shuchi in Team India's squads for the England tour," the BCCI said. "Shuchi was ruled out of the tour after sustaining a left shin injury, which was diagnosed during the pre-tour camp at the BCCI Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru," it added.—*PTI*

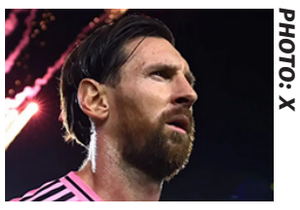


PHOTO: X

WC: Lionel Messi leads, Suarez, and Busquets included

DUBAI, 12 JUNE

Inter Miami announced its squad for the FIFA Club World Cup 2025 on Wednesday, with Argentina legend Lionel Messi set to lead the team. Suarez, Busquets were also included in the team. The revamped Club World Cup, with an expanded 32-team roster, is scheduled to take place between 14 June and 13 July in the United States. The tournament will also be a warm-up for the FIFA World Cup next year, with the US being one of the host countries. —*PTI*

Indiana Pacers down Oklahoma City Thunder

NEW YORK, 12 JUNE

Backup guards Bennedict Mathurin and T.J. McConnell helped Indiana's bench break out with 49 points as the Pacers topped the Oklahoma City Thunder 116-107 on Wednesday to claim a 2-1 lead in the NBA Finals. Thanks to 27 points from Mathurin and the kind of pyrotechnics the Pacers have grown to adore from reserve point guard McConnell, Indiana has the advantage in the best-of-seven series. Tyrese Haliburton provided heroics with 22 points, 11 assists, and nine rebounds while Pascal Siakam added 21 points for the Pacers.—*PTI*

'Sacrifice, fight, dominate': Gambhir's war cry for England

We are without our three most experienced players

BECKENHAM, 12 JUNE

India head coach Gautam Gambhir has called on his team to move out of its "comfort zone" and make the upcoming Test series against England a "memorable" one, especially in the absence of retired stars Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, and R Ashwin. India will search for their maiden series victory in England since 2007, when the five-match rubber starts with the first Test at Leeds on June 20."There are two ways of looking at this tour.

One is we are without our three most experienced players, or we got this phenomenal opportunity to do something special for the country," Gambhir told BCCI.tv, referring to the recent retirements of Ashwin, Rohit, and Kohli. The former India opener said he can feel the "passion and the commitment" to achieve something special flowing through the current bunch, led by Shubman Gill."

When I look around in this group, I think I see the hunger, the passion, and the commitment to do something special. If we make sacrifices, if we come out of our comfort zone, if we start fighting not every day but every session, every hour, and every ball, I think we can have a memorable tour," he added. —*PTI*

Indian cricket team in a huddle during a nets session in Beckenham in London PHOTO: SCREENSHOT

Cummins enters 300 Test wickets club

LORD'S, 12 JUNE

Australia captain Pat Cummins became the eighth from his country to 300 Test wickets as his 6 for 28, the best figures by a Test captain at Lord's, dismantled South Africa on the second day of the World Test Championship (WTC) final.It meant that, for the first time in Test history, there was a bowling attack with three players holding 300 or more wickets playing together Cummins joining Mitchell Starc and Nathan Lyon in this current group. Josh Hazlewood sits on 280."It's great, and I've got some family here, which is nice," Cummins told the host broadcast at the innings break. "They were batting pretty well, so happy we've got a decent lead this first innings. —*PTI*

Brendon McCullum feels England is going to be tested against India PHOTO: X/@BAZMCCULLUM42

England is going to be tested against prepared India, says McCullum

LONDON, 12 JUNE

England head coach Brendon McCullum believes India have arrived well-prepared and full of belief for the upcoming five-match Test series, but his team is also clear about where it wants to be in the eagerly-anticipated showdown beginning 20 June in Leeds.

The series will kick off India's new World Test Championship cycle.

"They're an outstanding cricketing nation, who will come here with high hopes, and we are looking forward to seeing them," McCullum told 'Sky Sports Cricket'.

India begins a new era after the Test retirements of veterans Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, and R Ashwin. The team will be led by Shubman Gill and features a youthful lineup including Sai Sudharsan and Yashasvi Jaiswal. England all-rounder Jacob Bathel has been recalled, and McCullum was all praise for the 21-year-old.

"Bethell has a good life in front of him. For a 21-year-old, he's got a real poise, and that allows him to go out there and be present and show off his flair and talent," McCullum said.

England, on the other hand, has just completed a whitewash of the West Indies in a six-match white-ball series. Their focus now shifts to the red-ball format as they gear up to take India and also prepare for the Ashes later this year.

"It's important the guys refresh. We know where we want to get to as a Test team."

"We have Shoaib Bashir, who is growing in Test cricket every day. We know we are going to be tested against India, and they will arrive prepared," he added. —*PTI*

INDIA WOMEN FALL TO LOWEST-EVER RANK OF 70 IN FIFA RANKINGS

NEW DELHI, 12 JUNE

Indian football hit a new low as the women's national team fell to a record low of 70 in the latest FIFA rankings, released by the apex football body on Thursday.

The Blue Tigresses lost consecutive matches to Uzbekistan in the latest May-June transfer window, conceding 9.93 ranking points in the process and falling one further spot in the rankings.

India's women's best ranking remains 49th in December 2013. Though it remained around the 50-rank mark till August 2022, it has remained on a steady decline since.

The latest update adds more misery in Indian football, with the men's team losing to lower-ranked Hong Kong two days ago, making its extremely difficult for it to qualify for the next edition of the AFC Asian Cup. —*PTI*

GOAL DISALLOWED

India lose 1-2 to Argentina

AMSTELVEEN, 12 JUNE

India's late goal from penalty was disallowed in dramatic circumstances and Jugraj Singh failed to score after it was retaken as they lost 1-2 to Argentina for their fourth successive defeat in the European leg of FIH Pro League hockey here on Thursday.

Drag-flicker Jugraj struck in the fourth minute off the first penalty corner of the match to give India the lead, but Tomas Domene (9th and 49th) scored a brace, both from PCs, to hand Argentina the win.

Down 1-2 in the fourth and final quarter, India earned a penalty stroke two minutes from the final hooter, and Jugraj was successful in sounding the board. Argentina asked for a video referral on the ground that Jugraj's left foot was well ahead of the ball while he took the stroke.

The video umpire ruled in Argentina's favour, but India captain Hardik Singh asked the referee to check whether the Argentina goalkeeper Tomas Santiago was already ahead of the goal-line before Jugraj took the stroke.

This time, India got a favourable decision from the video umpire. Jugraj was allowed to retake the stroke but his shot was saved this time by Santiago.

Hardik led India as regular captain Harmanpreet Singh is down with a finger injury.

Argentina got as many as eight PCs while India earned just three. —*PTI*

Wimbledon announces record $73M prize fund

LONDON, 12 JUNE

Wimbledon's prize money has risen to a record 53.5 million pounds (about $73 million) and the singles champions will each earn three million pounds ($4 million), All England Club officials announced on Thursday.

The total amount is 3.5 million pounds ($6.8 million) more than last year, an increase of 7%, and exactly twice the pot handed out to competitors at the grass-court Grand Slam 10 years ago.

"We're immensely proud of the fact that if you look back 10 years, you can see the increase over that period and 7% this year," All England chair Deborah Jevans said. "And we have listened to the players, we have engaged with the players."

The 2025 winners' checks represent an 11.1% jump on last year's prizes for the men's and women's singles champions and come amid growing player demands for a bigger share of grand slam profits. "The focus on just the prize money at four events, the Grand Slams, does not get to the heart of what the challenge is for tennis," Jevans added.

—*PTI*

Coach resigns after dispute with Robert Lewandowski

WARSAW, 12 JUNE

The coach of Poland's national soccer team announced Thursday has resigned as head coach, days after a spat with star striker Robert Lewandowski.

"I have concluded that, given the current situation, the best decision for the good of the national team is my resignation from the position of head coach," Michal Probierz said in a statement published by the Polish Football Association.

Probierz stripped Barcelona striker Lewandowski of his position as team captain on the eve of a World Cup qualifier against Finland earlier this week, and named Inter Milan midfielder Piotr Zielinski as the new captain.

Lewandowski reacted by saying he would no longer play for the national team as long as Probierz remains head coach. Poland went on to suffer an embarrassing 2-1 defeat to Finland, putting its qualification hopes into jeopardy.

The 36-year-old Lewandowski, who has played a record 158 games for his country and is the leading scorer with 85 goals, is arguably the most outstanding player in the history of Polish soccer. —*PTI*

CLUB WORLD CUP REFEREES TO WEAR EYE-LEVEL CAMERAS

MIAMI, 12 JUNE

Referees at the Club World Cup will wear eye-level cameras to finally allow fans to see exactly what the officials are looking at during a soccer match.

FIFA has announced the innovation will be implemented at its newly expanded tournament, which kicks off in Miami on Saturday. But on closer inspection, the technology appears to be more about improving the experience for television viewers than improving the game. For instance, only "non-controversial" images will be shown during the match. —*PTI*

DIKSHA MAKES MODEST START WITH EVEN PAR ROUND AT HULENCOURT

HULENCOURT, 12 JUNE

Diksha Dagar, one of the seven Indians on show at the Hulencourt Women's Open, began with a modest even par 72 in the first round of the event.

Diksha, who has been in fine form this season and has been in the top 10 of the Ladies European Tour's Order of Merit, had three birdies and three bogeys.

She started on the back nine and bogeyed the 14th, but turned in one-under with birdies on the 16th and the 18th. A bogey on the second followed by a birdie on the third meant she was still under par. A bogey on the seventh, which was her 16th hole, saw her finish at even par. Rookie Avani Prashanth was 1-under through seven holes, while Amandeep Drall, playing her first LET event this season, and Sneha Singh, playing her second event, shot 2-over 74 each and were T-67th.

Tvesa Malik carded 76 as did Vani Kapoor and both were T-106 while Hitaashee Bakshi struggled to 79 and was T-128.

Leading the field was Australia's Kelsey Bennett (67), who had nine birdies alongside two bogeys and on double bogey late in her round on the fourth, which was the 13th hole. She began on the 10th with three birdies in the first four holes and finished with three birdies on the last three holes. Three players, Kylie Henry of Scotland, French golfer Nastasia Nadaud, and Lydia Hall of Wales, finished their first rounds with 69. —*PTI*

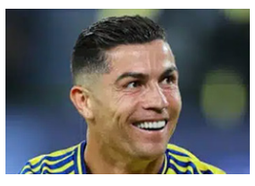
FIFA WORLD CUP 2025

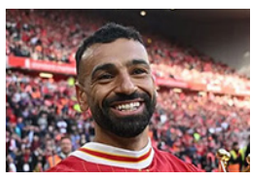
Five global superstars who will miss action in USA

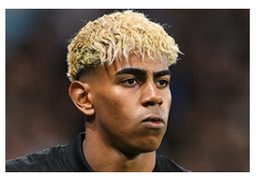
LONDON, 12 JUNE

FIFA's inaugural expanded Club World Cup in the United States has one billion dollars of prize money on the line, but will be missing some of the game's star names.

Taking place in 12 venues in 11 cities across the USA, many of the best teams in men's club football will compete for the trophy between 14 June-13 July 2025.







Cristiano Ronaldo (Al Nassr)
The 40-year-old Portuguese striker was said to be seeking a means to feature in the tournament. The idea had been raised by FIFA president Gianni Infantino, who said Ronaldo could leave Saudi Arabian club Al Nassr to a club that had qualified for the event, with talks being done regarding the matter.

Ronaldo, who won the Nations League with Portugal last weekend, being the five-time Ballon d'Or winner, showed after the game however he would remain at Al Nassr.

Neymar (Santos)
Neymar, the Brazilian star, had injury woes in Saudi Arabia at Al-Hilal and came back to Santos in January of 2025 to get fit and fire ahead of the World Cup next summer. Even though he has faded with age, the 33-year-old forward remains one of the biggest names in the game, and his absence is a commercial loss as well.

"Neymar, what can I say about him? He's an outstanding player, who, for me, in my football cycle, is in the top three, with Cristiano and Messi," said Brazil midfielder Casemiro.

Mohamed Salah (Liverpool)
Egyptian winger, Salah, who set a new Premier League record of goal involvements, 29 goals and 18 assists, is absent. Following a taxing campaign where he dwindled during the last few months, Salah may not mind having the summer off.

The winger shared a picture on Instagram of himself sunbathing on the beach. It will, however, be a pity that African football star Salah, captain Virgil van Dijk, and others will not have the opportunity of a possible rematch with their Champions League conquerors, PSG.

Lamine Yamal (Barcelona)
The winger of Spain has scored 53 goals in all competitions this season and is among the contenders to lift the Ballon d'Or.

The exciting dribbling and affection for the spectacular make Yamal one of the greatest attractions in world football nowadays.

He is likened to the erstwhile Barcelona star, Lionel Messi, but due to the absence of the Spanish giants, he might have lost his only opportunity to play against the Argentine captain, who will be representing Inter Miami.

Bukayo Saka (Arsenal)
The FA Cup with Arsenal in 2020 was the only club trophy, not counting the FA Community Shield, that England international Saka has won.

Under Mikel Arteta, the team demonstrated that they have closed the gap and are now competing for the big prizes, such as eliminating Real Madrid in the Champions League, but fell short.

Saka could use some additions to his medal collection, having been a player of his quality and having played six seasons of top-level football regularly. —*PTI*